BRANDING?
JUST SAY NO!

In 2003 a group of people who presumably see themselves as “movers and shakers” and who move in the circle of ambitious politicians, managed to convince them that the Island needed a “make over” to create a new and exciting image for the 21st century. In due course, Tynwald voted half a million pounds of public money to the Branding Committee.

The current branding exercise is symptomatic of successive Manx Governments’ paranoid approach to what they believe is the outside world’s perception (when we register at all) of the Isle of Man.

Certainly, in the present situation, it is easy to see the attraction for the Manx Government of a new image but, as that would involve multiple resignations, it is not likely to happen.

On the one hand, we have the ludicrously overblown claims by the likes of Alan Bell that, “we are a player on the international stage,” or Donald Gelling with his, “we are in the top drawer of financial service centres,” or the delusions of the Film Commission that half of Hollywood is beating a path to our door.

On the other hand, we have over reaction and hyper-sensitivity when the UK and world media report on the Island in a manner that gives rise to the ‘tax haven” label. However, as the current image of the Manx Government of a new image makes us appear as if we are equal in rank to Blair and Aherne. The local media appear to go along with this.

We have our senior politicians strutting about as if they are the statesmen of some independent sovereign nation, forgetting all the while that we are a Crown Dependency answerable to some junior Minister in the UK Government. They present themselves to the Manx people as if they are equal in rank to Blair and Aherne. Our Manx politicians have given themselves the titles and status of a national Government, and to complete the self deception, the high salaries as well. The local media appear go along with this delusion.

No doubt, government hopes we will get rid of, on the one hand, our “IT, Manx cat and kipper” image and, on the other, the “dodgy tax haven” label. However, as the current image of the Manx Government is one of a scandal-ridden, financially illiterate administration, they are going to have their work cut out. In any case, why on earth should the taxpayer pay anything when the main beneficiaries will be the business sector and some foreign consultants?

How will the local media handle any story that seriously damages the Manx brand identity they seem so keen to support? Why on earth is Manx National Heritage involved? Do they really think they reflect our national identity and culture at present?

More and more “heritage” is presented to us, but the Island becomes less Manx by the day, it seems. The Manx people are not a commodity to be branded. Living, breathing inhabitants cannot be treated like soap powder. One of the most irritating aspects of the branding exercise is the extortion to the people to get behind it and support what in the end will be just an expensive advertising campaign. We should remember the late Marje Joughin, treat it with the indifference it deserves, and just say “not in my name, thank you.”

M I K E ' S
E N R O N
A C C O U N T I N G

The Chief Minister’s announcement that the entire board of the MEA had resigned when it became clear to them that they no longer had the confidence of the Council of Ministers is something of a joke.

Has it not occurred to Mr. Donald Gelling and his colleagues that the Manx public may no longer have confidence in them? Has the Council of Ministers not yet realised the seriousness of the new economic situation, or are they once again in denial? Perhaps they think they can bluff their way through this crisis. Perhaps they will cobbled together some “action plan” in time for the next sitting of Tynwald. Perhaps a combination of the CoMin bloc vote and putting the frighteners on backbenchers will force through a rescue plan for the MEA involving our reserve funds and repayment of the unauthorised loans. The Manx Government will go to almost any lengths to have this whole affair buried as soon as possible.

No matter what the eventual outcome of any report or inquiry into the MEA that may appear in due course, there is no doubt in the public mind who bears the ultimate responsibility and that is the Council of Ministers, the Treasury, the DTI and the entire membership of Tynwald bar one. Only a single MHK has consistently probed for the truth since 2001 and he has been repeatedly vilified for his efforts. It has been the total failure of the remainder to scrutinise and monitor the MEA, or even to ask a few simple questions, that has brought us to this state.

Mec Vannin has been criticised in recent times for wishing to de-stabilise the Manx Government. Well all we can say is, if that was our desire, we could do no better than leave this Administration to bring the Manx economy to its knees. The UK media are circling and it is entirely the failure of this Government to be truly accountable and to turn a blind eye to maladministration, that is attracting them.
The above chart shows population growth rate in the Isle of Man against the UK. Since 1976, the Isle of Man's official population has been pumped up from over one quarter to approaching half of a percent of the population, the predominantly English landscape and an offshore English culture.

Many of the immigrants to our country complain about the relatively low level of immigration into their own country. That's fine as long they don't try branding us as being small-minded xenophobes.

Mec Vannin has always opposed the artificial population increase inflicted upon us. It is not based upon scaremongering and racism but demonstrated fact.
BRITISH-IRISH COUNCIL: SUMMIT OR NOUGHT?

The seventh summit meeting of the British-Irish Council took place in May at the Villa Marina in Douglas. This was a ministerial level meeting attended by several heads of Government or deputies, and chaired by our own Chief Minister. A pity then, that when the BIC met it was to talk about telemedicine rather than any implementation of the Good Friday Agreement.

Telemedicine is the IoM’s special area of work within the BIC and very laudable as far as it goes, but are these summit meetings anything more than a distraction from the real issue i.e. self-determination for the people in the north of Ireland with devolution of power to a Northern Ireland Assembly. The Assembly, an important element of the GFA, was dissolved in 2002 by the UK Government. It would seem that by hosting this summit the IoM Government has aided and abetted the UK Government in perpetuating the illusion that something is being done to advance the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement.

Bugs for auction?

As the row rumbles on over the Cheshire Constabulary’s investigation of the IoM Constabulary, a way of regaining some of the expenditure may have been identified.

When Sinn Féin discovered that its Falls Road offices had been bugged, they auctioned the device on the internet with a certificate of authenticity signed by Gerry Adams. Substantial amounts were raised.

Perhaps our glorious leaders could do the same with the bugs unearthed at Douglas Police HQ and get a member of the Council of Ministers to sign a guarantee of authenticity.

On second thoughts, maybe it would be better if Gerry signed it....

Some forthcoming productions from the IoM Film Commission:

"I'm an MHK's wife - Get me out of here!" (Location - Victoria Road Prison)
"The Price is Right"
"It's a Bug's Life"
"Call my Bluff"
"Flog It!"

mec vannin WEBSITE

www.mecvannin.org

Here you’ll find more information about the Party, including nearly all the previous issues of Yn Pabýr Seyer.

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mec_vannin@yahoo.com

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Mec Vannin News

Over the past few months, Mec Vannin has been taking positive part in government (as it always has) with, amongst other things, submissions on the following:

The proposed capping of tax on the exceedingly wealthy.

Unsurprisingly, the Party did not regard this as the best thing since free money, which is exactly what it represents to the exceedingly wealthy. The full text of the submission can be read on the internet at: www.yahoogroups.com/groups/mec_vannin under the title "Mec Vannin opposes anti-social tax proposals."

Consistent with long standing Party policy, we also opposed the reform of Local Authorities as being, on the one hand, a creation of yet another unnecessary intermediary layer of government and, on the other, a back-door move to centralise local government and further remove the people from government. The full text of the submission can be read at www.yahoogroups.com/groups/mec_vannin under the title "IoM Local Authority Plans."

Disturbingly, it has been reported to us that the subsequent report circulated by the DLGE to Local Authorities and members of Tywald prior to the debate states, in Appendix B that Mec Vannin states that “...the proposals make reasonable sense.” The actual words were, “In summary, we do not support the proposals.” A slight discrepancy? Perhaps someone in the DLGE can explain the disparity.

Civil Partnerships is also out for consultation and the Party has supported the notion of people who share their lives and expenses being recognised in law as such if they wish. The full response can be viewed at www.yahoogroups.com/groups/mec_vannin under the title “Civil Partnership proposals in the Isle of Man”. The submission DOES NOT favour copying UK law.

Smoking in public is on the agenda and the Party is resubmitting its previously expressed view on the matter which can be read at www.yahoogroups.com/groups/mec_vannin under the title “IoM Local Authority Plans.”

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AGM REPORT

The Party’s AGM, held in May 2005, elected the following people as Officers of the Party:

President Bernard Moffatt
Chairman Mark Kermode
Secretary Verity Gorry
Treasurer Cristy Jerry
PRO Mark Kermode
Editor Alan Comaish
Cultural Officer Freddy Cowle

The following Resolutions were passed and build upon existing Party policy:

This AGM rejects the concept of “mass medication” as represented by fluoridisation of the drinking water supply.

In light of its oft repeated policy of a “Caring and prosperous society”, this AGM believes that the government in the Isle of Man is guilty of ignoring its own policies and driving down living standards with pay adjustments to public sector workers that do not match inflationary increases.

This AGM reiterated reiterates the Party’s opposition to income tax “capping” for the wealthy and further states that this is yet another example of policies that make the rich richer and the poor poorer.

This AGM, citing its long standing opposition to BBC licence fees, calls upon the UK Home Office to justify this tax in light of the differing laws applied in its own country and to other British Crown Territories and Dependencies, particularly in view of the apparent attempt to drive viewers away from analogue channels and onto digital despite no explicit support being extended to the Isle of Man.

This AGM endorses calls for a full public enquiry into the management of the MEA and associated companies and further calls for a thorough inquiry into the lack of diligence of the Isle of Man Treasury in its scrutiny of the financial affairs of the MEA and associated companies.

I am interested in joining Mec Vannin. Please send me a copy of your policy summary and a membership form to:

(Address)

Name.................................

(Please print clearly)

Junior / Associate / Unwaged membership.

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Through untrammelled immigration, frequently claim how much these people contribute to our culture. Listening to some of them (politicians and others), you would swear that without such immigration, we would have no culture of our own.

It is appropriate to recall the first paragraph of the leading article of Issue Two of Yn Pabyr Seyr, back in July 1993 under the title, "Will this be the last Manx Tynwald?"

"The November election is probably the most important for this Island in over one hundred years. It will decide whether or not the Manx nation survives, or ends up in its own museum.

"If the present Government is re-elected largely unchanged, with the same constitution, the latter will be the case. You had better believe it. Already the influence of the Manx people on their own destiny is weak that, many of those waving it with the greatest hatred towards anything not English would, if challenged, profess to be Manx.

That government remained largely unchanged and it is now something of a rarity to encounter a group of Manx people in the Isle of Man. Culture? The life, sanitised and, let’s be quite honest, highly artificial "culture" as epitomised by Yn Chruinnagh is not the culture of the people. The language could easily go the way.

The World Cup in football of 2002 was bad enough. The "Euro 2004" event saw the populaces and allegiances of the society in the Isle of Man revealed for what it is: Offshore English. English football culture has a strong undercurrent of low racism and neo-fascism. The reaction of both the England football fanatics and the English press towards the Swiss referee would have likely resulted in criminal proceedings had the same expressions of outright hatred been directed towards a Muslim or colour person.

It would be nice to think that here, in the Isle of Man, we would escape such neanderthal expressions of tribalism, particularly someone else’s tribalism. The predominance of the flag of England and the gusto with which it was waved told all. Worse than that, many of those waving it with the greatest gusto, with the greatest hatred towards anything not English would, if challenged, profess to be Manx.

Bear in mind that had Scotland, Ireland or Wales been in the competition rather than England, there would have been little interest. Those who are trying to preserve the concept of Manx (be it through politics, language or the likes of the Department of Education’s Manx history curriculum) are facing an uphill and quite possibly insurmountable battle.

Do you support a fully independent Isle of Man, governed for the benefit of the Manx people? Do you support fully accountable, democratic, republican government for the Island? Do you support generating wealth, talent and ideas from within our own community? Do you support giving our children the opportunity to rise through the "glass ceiling"?

Do you oppose the exploitation of our country and its people for simple greed? Do you oppose the finance sector domination of our economy? Do you oppose our subjugation by the United Kingdom for its own self-serving aims? Do you oppose corrupt, secretive and unaccountable government?

If you answer yes to the above, then you probably support Mec Vannin’s policies and should consider joining. Please fill in and send this coupon to:

The Secretary, Mec Vannin, (see homepage)